FOR THE
RECORD

Thursday | 26th August 2021

WEATHER

Light to moderate showers are expected on Wednesday in parts of Hyderabad

MONETISATION: 'CONGRESS HAD DONE IT TOO'

We are not selling off assets: Sitharaman

A day after Congress leaders raised questions about the purpose of 'monetisation' of public infrastructure assets, Union finance and corporate-affairs minister Nirmala Sitharaman hit back at the party and its leaders, accusing them of misleading people and "telling" untruths.

"I wish the Opposition questions with some homework done. Who actually monetised the Mumbai– Pune corridor," she asked. "Was it not done by the Congress party which was headed by Sonia Gandhi and ₹8,000-odd crore raised by that?" she said, replying to a question at a media conference organised on the review of public-sector banks.

She also said a request for proposal for monetisation of New Delhi Railway Station was issued in 2008 by the Congress, and added that they sold off the railway station and that it was now owned by jijaji [Rahul's brother-in-law Robert Vadra]. She also said that during commonwealth games of 2010, Congress had creamed off everything into accounts of its cronies.

The minister did not address allegations that monetisation was meant to transfer public assets to a few monopolists, that banking on a few large private companies for economic transformation would lead to enslavement, that 'leasing' is only an excuse, and whether raising money can be a goal in itself.

Instead, she said, "Does he understand what is monetisation?... We are not selling off. They [the assets] will be handed back to the government." Under the National Monetisation Pipeline there would be no change of ownership. "It [assets] will remain with Government of India. They are brownfield assets, which are almost completed but are underutilised," the Minister said.

Firm gets Canada money, on the lookout for assets

Anchorage Infrastructure Investment Holding Ltd (AIIH) has received approval from the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday for a foreign direct investment proposal, entailing an investment of up to ₹15,000 crore.

The approved proposal includes the transfer of shares of Bangalore International Airport Limited to Anchorage, and an investment of ₹950

crore in AIIH by '2726247 Ontario Inc.', a wholly owned subsidiary of the administrator of OMERS, one of Canada's largest pension funds.

Anchorage is also interested in leasing out of state-owned infrastructure assets including roads, railways, airports, sports stadiums, power transmission lines and gas pipelines to private operators.

Yahoo shuts news operations in India owing to FDI rules

American web services provider Yahoo shut down its services in India on Thursday, August 26, thereby ceasing the publication of content operations across the country from today. However, the web portal, owned by technology company Verizon Media, assured its users that their Yahoo accounts, e-mail, and search experiences will not be affected in any manner.

"As of August 26th, 2021, Yahoo India will no longer be publishing content," a statement on the Yahoo India homepage read. "Your Yahoo Account, Mail, and Search experiences will not be affected in any way and will operate as usual. We thank you for your support and readership."

According to the frequently asked questions (FAQ) section on the Yahoo website, the company has decided to cease publication of all content in India, shutting down Yahoo's content operations across the country. The content offerings closed include Yahoo News, Yahoo Cricket, Yahoo Finance, Entertainment, and MAKERS India.

"We did not come to this decision lightly," Yahoo said, adding that the company's operations in India were impacted by the recent changes to the country's regulatory laws "that now limit the foreign ownership of media companies that operate and publish digital content in India."

(Hindustan Times)

Where blue whales sing

Scientists have recorded blue whale songs for the first time in Indian waters off the Lakshadweep islands in the Arabian Sea. Their presence in Lakshadweep demonstrates that the waters in this archipelago are rich and productive. Experts say whales singing is a likely signal that the area is a breeding ground for whales for certain parts of the year.

5Ws&1H

Sajjanar moved to RTC, Raveendra in

In an unexpected move, the state government on Wednesday transferred Cyberabad police commissioner V.C.Sajjanar and appointed him as managing director of TSRTC. M. Stephen Raveendra (1999 batch) will take over as the new Cyberabad commissioner. Both the officers have a record of "encounters".

— Harsha Jakkula

US admiral meets Gen Bipin Rawat

Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat held a meeting with Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command (US INDOPACOM) Admiral John C Aquilino in New Delhi on August 25, 2021. Issues related to peace & security in the region and bilateral defence cooperation were part of the agenda. The meet gains prominence in the backdrop of US vice president Kamala Harris' comment on China, where she said their actions in the South China Sea amount to "coercion" and "intimidation."

— Anvesh Banoth

Pegasus: SC asks Bengal to wait

The Supreme Court on Wednesday urged the West Bengal government to wait and not go ahead with a separate judicial inquiry into the Pegasus snooping allegations when the top court is already seized of the issue.

ICICI Bank files ₹563-crore cheating case against Karvy

Within days of the arrest of Karvy Group promoter and arrest of its founder Chairman and MD, C Parthasarathy, in a bank fraud case, ICICI Bank has filed a cheating case against Karvy Stock Broking Company Ltd.

Following the complaint, a case was registered against KSBL and transferred to the Economic Offences Wing, Cyberabad, and a special team was formed to investigate the case, according to the Cyberabad Commissioner of Police on Tuesday.

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Agribiz firm takes up UoH blockchain tech

Farmers in Tamil Nadu, and their peers in other States, are about to soon taste the benefits of blockchain, artificial intelligence and machine learning solutions. Samunnati, a Chennai-based organisation which works with Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and other players in the agri ecosystem, has joined hands with the University of Hyderabad to introduce these deep technologies that promise to reduce operational inefficiencies.

For one, it ensures proper use of credit. If a token is issued to purchase seeds or fertilisers, the system will ensure that it is used for that purpose only and not for something else. Developed by the University of Hyderabad (UoH) in association with a few partners, the integrated agri blockchain can record every step in a product's value chain.

(BusinessLine)

GAIL OMVEDT 1941-2021

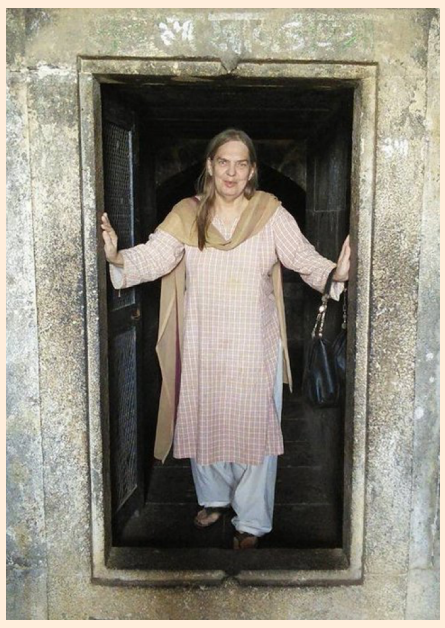
Visiting scholar who stayed back to find home

Researcher, author and one of the intellectual voices of the Bahujan movement Gail Omvedt passed away on Wednesday. She was 81.

Dr. Omvedt was an American-born Indian scholar who authored books on Dalit politics, women's struggle and anti-caste movement. She also participated in various people's movements, including the one for the rights of people displaced by the Koyna Dam.

Ms. Omvedt co-founded Shramik Mukti Dal with her husband and activist Bharat Patankar. The couple's daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter are settled in the U.S.

"Dr. Gail Omvedt not only contributed as a researcher in social movements, saints' literature, traditions but also actively participated in movements for rights of women, deprived sections. She will remain as a scholar who became an integral part of society," Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said.



As a college student in the U.S., Ms. Omvedt was part of the anti-war movement there.

She visited India during her doctoral research work to study social movements here and studied the work of Jotirao Phule. Her thesis was on the "Non-Brahmin movement in western India".

After deciding to live in India, her association with veteran social worker Indutai Patankar led to her studying and participating in women's struggles.

Ms. Omvedt authored over 25 books, including In Colonial Society – Non-Brahmin Movement in Western India, Seeking Begampura, Buddhism in India, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Mahatma Phule, Dalit and the Democratic Revolution, Understanding Caste, We Will Smash the Prison and New Social Movement in India.

She was the head of Phule-Ambedkar chair in the Department of Sociology of the University of Pune; Professor at the Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhegan; and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi.

The last rites will be conducted on Thursday at Kasegaon in Sangli district. (The Hindu)